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25. ROLE OF PALAS [*BUTEA MONOSPERMA* (LAM.) TAUB.] LEAFSTALKS IN BAISAKHI STICKLAC PRODUCTION

Palas (Flame of the forest) is one of the commonest trees in the plains of India and is extensively utilised for lac cultivation. Being a deciduous species it sheds its leaves by March-April and, therefore, Glover (1937) considered its leafstalks of only negative value in lac production, since in his view the lac insects which settle on them during *baisakhi* (rangeeni-summer) crop also fall along with them.

Closer observations by us on heavily ino-

culated lac bearing trees, however, revealed that although the leaflets of the trifoliate pinnate compound leaves are shed by the end of March-April, the lac bearing leafstalks consisting of petiole and rachis, remain attached to the shoot till the end of May. These can profitably be harvested *ari* (immature) during April-May as advocated by Malhotra & Krishnaswami (1962). Average length and number per shoot was recorded to be 19.3 cm

TABLE 1

BAISAKHI ARI STICKLAC YIELD* FROM SHOOTS AND LEAFSTALKS

Broodlac Used per tree (g)	Average per tree yield (g)						Percent contributed by leafstalks
	LAC	STICKS		SCRAPED		LAC	
	Shoots	Leaf stalks	Total	Shoots	Leaf stalks	Total	
600	1470	130	1600	502	60	562	10.7
800	1534	232	1766	539	81	620	13.1
1000	1580	274	1854	541	114	655	17.5
1200	2116	370	2486	655	182	837	21.8
1400	2255	392	2647	778	197	975	20.2
1600	2383	400	2783	855	164	1019	16.1
1800	2466	403	2869	965	157	1122	14.0
Average	1972	314	2286	691	136	827	16.5

* Average of 4 Replications.

and 11.7 cm respectively (average of 100 shoots).

In order to assess the precise quantitative contribution of leafstalks, an experiment was laid out under a randomized block design on a total of 280 trees, with seven brood rates ranging from 600 to 1800 g/tree, replicated four times with 10 trees per plot, at Kundri lac area, Palamau, Bihar. Inoculations were done in October 1973 and *ari* harvesting during the first week of May 1974. Yield record has been summarised in table 1.

It is apparent from the above table that on the average 16.5 per cent sticklac (scraped lac) has been contributed by the leafstalks (variation 10.7 to 21.8 per cent). This contribution is lost when the *baisakhi* is cropped

at the time of maturity during June-July and becomes available when cropped *ari* during April-May. Malhotra & Krishnaswami (1962) recorded 41 per cent average post-April reduction in sticklac yield and thus advocated *ari* harvesting. They, however, could not satisfactorily explain the causes of this extraordinary discrepancy. The present work endeavours to point out a major source of crop loss and supports the view of cropping of lac as *ari* for the sake of sticklac production in areas of hot climate.

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26. OCCURRENCE OF THE ASPIDOCHIROTE HOLOTHURIAN, *HOLOTHURIA* (*SEMPEROTHURIA*) *CINERASCENS* (BRANDT 1835) ALONG THE COAST OF KANYAKUMARI (S. INDIA)

(With a photograph and two text-figures)

INTRODUCTION

During an ecological and faunistic survey of the east coast of India we had an opportunity to collect specimens of an Aspidochirote holothurian from rocky shores along the coast of Kanyakumari at Vattakotai, Leepuram, Chinnamuttom, Kovalam, Kadiapattinam, Muttom

and Colachel. Detailed examination of these specimens revealed that they are *Holothuria cinerascens* (Brandt).

Diagnosis: Body cylindrical (Photo. 1), 12 to 28 cm long. Tentacles 20, peltate. Pedicels in three rows ventrally, papillae scattered dorsally. Radials twice larger than inter-radials. Polian vesicle single, bulbous.